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Letter dated 18 June 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to submit to you the statement by the Government of Burundi regarding the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 13 June 2015 (see annex).

I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Albert **Shingiro**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

15-10143 (E) 230615 240615

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Annex to the letter dated 18 June 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: French]

Communiqué of the Government of Burundi following the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union held in Johannesburg on 13 June 2015

The Government of the Republic of Burundi has taken note of communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.2 (DXV) of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, issued following the meeting held on 13 June 2015 in Johannesburg, South Africa, and, without prejudice to the upcoming consultations with the African Union Commission, has the honour to inform the nation and the international community of the following:

Electoral schedule

As recommended at the Summit of Heads of State of the East African Community held on 31 May 2015, and with a view to organizing free, calm, inclusive, credible and transparent elections in 2015, the Government has already postponed the elections to the latest possible dates allowed under the Constitution, in order to prevent the chaos that would arise from an institutional vacuum.

The new, technically and constitutionally acceptable schedule is as follows:

(a) Election of local councillors and deputies: 29 June 2015;

(b) Election of the President: 15 July 2015;

(c) Election of senators: 24 July 2015.

Even though the Government agrees with the principle of a consensus on the electoral schedule, that schedule could not extend beyond the limits allowed under the Constitution; otherwise, the authority responsible for calling elections would be guilty of high treason, under the Constitution.

Dialogue and easing of tensions during the electoral period

Regarding dialogue and the measures to be taken to ease tensions during the electoral period, it should be recalled that the Government has already proven its good faith by undertaking to suspend the execution of arrest warrants against the organizers of violent demonstrations. Because other parties also have a role to play in easing tensions, the Government has been waiting, to no avail, for the organizers to formally call for an end to the violent demonstrations, as requested at the Summit.

Disarming of armed civilians

Regarding the disarming of armed youth groups affiliated with political parties, the Government once again announces that the National Disarming Commission has been instructed to accelerate the pace of recovering all weapons held illegally by the population. It should be recalled that to date, over 100,000

firearms have been recovered by law enforcement officers as part of the disarming programme.

To achieve even more satisfactory results, however, the Government is appealing, through the joint security committees, to all the relevant partners — political parties, without exception, civil society organizations, the administration as a whole and the local population — to cooperate in this disarming campaign, in order to help in organizing excellent elections.

Any regional or international support in the form of observers recommended by the African Union would be welcome to witness this existing reality.

Still with a view to organizing safe elections, the Government has made a commitment to provide protection for political leaders before, during and after the elections, and remains at their disposal for the technical arrangements needed to fulfil that commitment. Once the polling stations have been announced, security units will be deployed to provide the safest environment possible.

Return of refugees

The Government welcomes the gradual and satisfactory return of refugees. More than 35,000 of the approximately 70,000 refugees who are reported to have fled owing to recent rumours have already returned, including 15,000 from the United Republic of Tanzania, who were recently welcomed by the Head of State in Makamba, in the south of the country, and others from Rwanda, in the northern provinces of Kirundo and Muyinga.

As it has already done, the Government plans to send more missions to countries hosting refugees to discuss their voluntary return. In this regard, the Government reiterates its request to countries and organizations hosting refugees to no longer impede their return, and to help raise the awareness of those who wish to return.

Finally, the Government of the Republic of Burundi stands ready to cooperate with any experts sent by its partners to ensure that the elections run smoothly.

Bujumbura, 16 June 2015

Philippe **Nzobonariba**
Secretary-General and Spokesperson of the Government